



West Virginia & Regional History Center
Newsletters

University Libraries

Spring 2015

WVRHC Newsletter, Spring 2015

West Virginia & Regional History Center

Follow this and additional works at: <https://researchrepository.wvu.edu/wvrhc-newsletters>

 Part of the [History Commons](#)



West Virginia and Regional History Center

NEWSLETTER

Volume 30, No. 2

West Virginia University Libraries

Spring 2015

Notes on the Origins of Storer College 150 Years Ago

Editor's note:

*The following article is compiled from a comprehensive history of Storer College by Shepherd University history professor Dawne Raines Burke. Readers interested in exploring Storer College's history and legacy in greater detail are referred to Professor Burke's groundbreaking book *An American Phoenix: A History of Storer College from Slavery to Desegregation, 1865-1955* which will be reissued in a new commemorative edition by Storer College Books on June 19, 2015, as part of the West Virginia University Libraries 2015 West Virginia Day Celebration.*

In Antebellum Virginia, educational opportunities for African Americans were not only lacking, they were forbidden by law! Whites found guilty of teaching slaves were subject to fine, imprisonment, or both. Their pupils faced lashing or even death. Educational pursuits by even free blacks were a civil offense leading to forfeiture of Virginia residency and banishment from the state.

Given this history, it is easy to understand why the establishment of a school for African Americans in Harpers Ferry, one hundred and fifty years ago, was a pivotal event in West Virginia and American history. Eventually named Storer College, this institution would educate more than 7,000 students during the course of its 90 plus year history.



Storer students Isabelle Stewart, Raymond McNeal, and Odetta Johnson sit on the lawn at school holding a school pennant, 1917.

The origins of Storer College rested in a determined effort by the Freewill Baptist Church to provide an education to as many of the thousands of slaves emancipated in 1863 as possible. A New England denomination, the first Freewill Baptist church was established in 1770 in New Durham, New Hampshire by Benjamin Randal, a George Whitefield convert. Whitefield, a British evangelist associated with the religious revival of the Great Awakening and influenced by the Age of Enlightenment, made several trips

West Virginia and Regional History Center NEWSLETTER. A publication of the West Virginia and Regional History Center and Special Collections, West Virginia University Libraries, Wise Library, P.O. Box 6069, Morgantown, WV 26506-6069. (304) 293-3536.

STAFF: Laura Bell, John Cuthbert, Kevin Fredette, Lori Hostuttler, Jane LaBarbara, Stewart Plein, Catherine Rakowski, Michael Ridderbusch, Anna Schein, Judy Sirk, Michael Thobois, Francisco Tovar, Christelle Venham, Laureen Wilson.

EDITOR: John Cuthbert Copyright 2015 by WVU Libraries ISSN 1041-8695

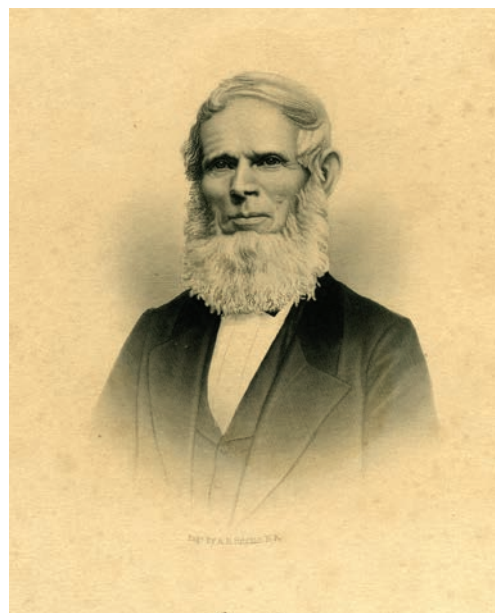
from England to Colonial America during the mid-eighteenth century. Reverend Whitefield became the model for the evangelical fervor and missionary zeal of the Free Will Baptists whose founders were indeed “reawakened” and “enlightened” to a greater sense of moral principle and social obligation through critical, autonomous reasoning.

Nearly one hundred years later, the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863 triggered an ambitious thrust by the Freewill Baptists, who had expanded their reach throughout New England and beyond, to help relieve the plight of freed slaves through education. The denomination, which had spread throughout New England and beyond, proceeded to found mission schools throughout the Shenandoah Valley. Free Will Baptist members readily and willingly relocated to the valley to establish these schools as well as a Shenandoah Home Mission Society center in Harper’s Ferry. While focused initially on providing elementary education to the masses, as time passed, their ultimate goal became the establishment of a college for Negroes in the south below the Mason-Dixon.



Curtis Freewill Baptist Church, Harpers Ferry, 1936.

While the Free Will Baptists and other religious organizations did much in the postwar years to establish a standardized level of education for southern freedmen, the subject also gained the attention of northern philanthropists, who became equally involved in the cause. In



Storer College benefactor, John Storer of Sanford, ME, ca. 1860.

the case of Storer College, a key benefactor was John Storer, a Congregationalist from Sanford, Maine, who owned stores throughout the Granite State and who had also made several profitable investments. Dedicated to the goal of education, in 1867 Storer pledged \$10,000 to Reverend Oren Burbank Cheney, a Free Will Baptist representative, to institute a school in the south for freedmen. Storer entered into a two-party contract with the Baptists leading to Storer College’s formation. That contract included five clauses: (a) Storer’s pledge was contingent upon a corresponding investment by the Free Will Baptists; (b) the sum was to be entrusted to an investment-third party for municipal bonds until the original pledge yielded \$40,000; (c) the corresponding Baptist investment was to be raised on or before January 1, 1868; (d) the institution should bear the name of its greatest benefactor; and (e) the original pledge, in the event of premature death, was to automatically revert to the John Storer estate.

When John Storer died on October 23, 1867, and his heirs exercised hereditary privilege over his real property, investments, and liquid assets, the Free Will Baptists initially feared their endeavors had been undertaken in vain; however, Storer’s children eventually were convinced that their father’s endowment should be honored and fulfilled. They emulated their father’s philanthropic model relinquishing all legal claim to his \$10,000 pledge to the Baptists for the school. Later, they even donated an additional \$1,000 to be used for establishing the school’s first library.

The Lockwood House, one of four federally-owned buildings acquired by the founding denomination, was the first physical structure to accommodate the school under the benefactor's name, Storer College. The cannon-bombarded, abandoned house, which provided temporary accommodations for the Baptists by ordinance of the reorganized government in 1865, formerly housed both Union and Confederate officers before and during the Civil War, as Harper's Ferry passed from Union to Confederate hands and vice versa. Official acquisition of these buildings was granted, by an Act of Congress, through the War Department's Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands, the federal authorization of which included the requisition and resale of abandoned properties, the supervision of freedmen activities, and provision for humanitarian aids and services.

Storer College was granted a charter by the West Virginia Legislature as "an institution of learning for the education of youth, without distinction of race or color" in 1867. The qualifying phrase "without distinction of race or color" was fiercely debated between the two legislative houses according to Free Will Baptist denominational correspondence. Those in favor of the school's broad charter believed that educational development was essential for the state's entire population, including both the state's majority and minority populations. Thus, Storer College was granted its charter as a state-approved normal department in the same year the West Virginia State Normal Department established Marshall [Academy] College in Huntington, Cabell County, as the state's first normal department for white students.



Lockwood House served alternately as a Civil War hospital and as the headquarters for at least two generals before becoming the home of the Mission School that evolved into Storer College.



John Brown's Fort, ca. 1910.

Abolitionist John Brown and his men sought refuge in this Harpers Ferry firehouse during Brown's famous raid on Harpers Ferry in October 1859. One of Brown's son was killed here, and another mortally wounded just outside. Three decades later, the building was disassembled and shipped to Chicago where it was exhibited during the World's Columbian Exposition in 1891. It lay abandoned on a vacant lot for several years thereafter until a drive was undertaken to return it to Harpers Ferry. Situated in a field near Storer College, in 1906 during the second meeting of the Niagara Movement, more than 100 attendees including W.E.B. DuBois visited the Fort, removing their shoes before treading upon what they considered "hallowed ground". The Fort was relocated on Storer College's campus in 1909. It remained there until 1969 when the National Park Service moved it a final time, to a site in lower Harpers Ferry just a short distance from its original location.

The West Virginia Legislature's vote for Storer College's charter, however, was remanded for vote until the spring session of the following year. As a result, although the institution had been in full operation under its legal name since 1867, the charter's passage was dated March 3, 1868. And thus, from what initially began as a mission school evolved a four-year college.

As noted above, Storer College went on to educate more than 7,000 students in the ensuing decades before closing its doors in 1955 due to desegregation and assorted other factors. Among its many notable graduates were J.R. Clifford (1848-1933), West Virginia's first African American attorney; Minnesota legislator John Francis Wheaton (1866-1922); pioneering pharmacist Ella P. Stewart (1893-1987); jazz legend Don Redmond (1900-1964); and Nnamdi Azikiwe (1904-1996), the first president of the nation of Nigeria. Such a legacy would make its founders proud indeed!

West Virginia Day 2015 Celebrates A Storer College Sesquicentennial

While Storer College officially came into existence in 1867, its origins date back to 1865 when the Freewill Baptist Church established a mission school in Harpers Ferry. The West Virginia and Regional History Center and West Virginia University Libraries will commemorate that seminal event in history during the WVU Libraries' annual West Virginia Day Celebration on June 18-19, 2015.

This year's West Virginia Day festivities will include the standard speaker's forum, exhibit opening, and commemorative West Virginia Day poster distribution as well as being enhanced by two premieres.

The first – the release of a new commemorative edition of *An American Phoenix: A History of Storer College from Slavery to Desegregation, 1865-1955* by Dawne Raines Burke – will occur on Thursday evening, June 18, during a special reception for friends and fans of Storer College. The author will be available to sign books for all comers during the event. The new edition will be the first offering of Storer College Books, a new imprint series of the WVU Press dedicated to African American history and experience.

On the morning of June 19, a new documentary film exploring the history of Storer College will receive

Visiting Committee

West Virginia University Libraries

Diane Hackney Oliver, Charleston, WV

Vaughn L. Kiger, Morgantown, WV

Brooks F. McCabe, Jr., Charleston, WV

R. Samuel Oliver, Jr., Charleston, WV

John E. Stealey, III, Shepherdstown, WV, Chairman

Richard R. Strother, New York, NY

its premiere screening at the West Virginia Day forum. A product of Rubicon Productions, supported by the West Virginia Humanities Council, *Storer College: A Legacy of Light & Learning* was produced by award-winning filmmaker Midge Finn Yost, a Harpers Ferry resident, active primarily in the Washington, DC area for many years.

Exhibits, and complimentary posters and refreshments (including West Virginia Birthday Cake!) will follow the forum. Indeed, West Virginia Day Celebration 2015 will have something for everybody, so mark your calendars to be here with us on June 18 & 19. All events are free and open to the public.



A Storer College orchestra, ca. 1925.

Selected Recent Accessions

Civil War Newspaper of Charleston, Virginia. "The Guerilla," Volume 1, Number 2. 1862, 4 pages, Acquired in 2014. A&M 4032.

Single issue of *The Guerilla*, published in Charleston, [West] Virginia by Associate Printers during Confederate occupation of the city. The four-page issue is volume 1, number 2, dated September 29, 1862. Under the nameplate are the words "Devoted to Southern Rights and Institutions." The contents regard the Civil War and associated political and military news.

Civil War Newspaper of Vicksburg, Mississippi. Reprint of "Daily Citizen" on Wallpaper. 1863, 1 page, Acquired in 2014. A&M 4033.

Edited reprint of the July 2, 1863 issue of *The Daily Citizen*, published in Vicksburg, Mississippi by J.M. Swords during the siege. This single-page reprint is printed on wallpaper. The original newspaper was also printed on wallpaper, due to the shortage of newsprint during the siege. This item is dated "Tuesday" July 2, 1863, and includes a note at the bottom dated July 4, 1863. When Vicksburg was captured on July 4, Union forces found the newspaper's type from July 2 still standing. They replaced two-thirds of the last column with other matter already in type, added a note about the end of the siege, and printed a new edition. For more information, see "The Daily Citizen Vicksburg, Mississippi", Information Circular 3 (Revised 1967), The Library of Congress Serial & Government Publications Division.

Cravens, Jay H., Compiler. Report Regarding Monongahela National Forest Timber Management. 1975, 1/4 in., Acquired in 2014. A&M 4030.

A photocopy of "The Monongahela Decision," a report compiled by Jay H. Cravens regarding the timber management practices of the Monongahela National Forest and the effect of those practices on the health of the forest. Cravens was the current Regional Forester. This material was compiled in the wake of the "Monongahela Decision" court case. The court found that current timber practices were in violation of the law and therefore restricted planned timbering of the forest.

Holt, Helen. Papers Regarding Federal Housing Administration and Other Material. 1927-2013, 10 in., Gift in 2014. A&M 4039.

Papers of Helen (Froelich) Holt, wife of West Virginia Senator Rush D. Holt, Sr. who later became involved with state and national politics. Contains a scrapbook of material

documenting Holt's work with the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) regarding nursing home reform. Scrapbook includes newspaper clippings, photographs, pamphlets, programs, and other material (1960-1963). Also contains items regarding the National Park Seminary at Forest Glen, where Holt had taught at the National Park College for Women (2008-2013); schools attended by Holt, including an auto-graph book, scrapbook and yearbook (1927-1932); a congressional directory (1938); and an album of photographs from Rush and Helen Holt's wedding (1941).

Miller, Lonnie, Compiler. Research Papers Regarding Coal History in Southwestern Pennsylvania. 1918-2014, 7 ft. 7 in., Acquired in 2015. A&M 4078.

Research papers regarding history of coal mining and coal disasters in southwestern Pennsylvania compiled by Lonnie Miller, an electrical inspector for the Bureau of Deep Mine Safety, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection. Much of this material was apparently used by him for his books "Robena: A Chronological History of Robena Mine" (1997), *Robena Photographs: A Pictorial History of Robena Mine in Greene County, Pennsylvania* (1998), and "Warwick Coal Mines, Greene County, Pennsylvania" (2000). The collection includes official mine accident reports; pamphlets; copies of books by Miller; publications by and about the National Mine Rescue Association and the UMWA, among other topics; historical narratives regarding mining in southwestern Pennsylvania; information regarding mine safety technology; photographs; mine maps; and other material.

Morgantown Newspaper "The Monongalia Gazette". 1804, 1809, 1 1/2 in., Acquired in 2014. A&M 4060.

Two original issues of the Morgantown newspaper "The Monongalia Gazette", dated 9 June 1804 and 6 October 1809. This newspaper, which began publication in 1804, was



Relaxing on a Berkeley Springs porch, ca. 1900.

the first to be published west of the Alleghenies. Both newspapers consist of four pages. The 1804 issue is complete, and is titled "The Monongalia Gazette, and Morgantown Weekly Advertiser". The 1809 issue is missing a small part of the second leaf (pages three and four).

Newbraugh, Fred T., Collector. Glass Plate Negatives of Berkeley Springs Scenes. ca. 1780s-1817, 1881-1910s, undated, 1 ft. 9 1/2 in., Gift in 2014.

Ninety glass plate negatives created ca. 1881-1910, chiefly of Berkeley Springs, West Virginia. Content of images date from ca. 1780s-1817 (these are facsimiles of documents and pictorial material), and the 1881-1910s, and undated. Subjects include buildings in Berkeley Springs, such as the baths, David Hunter Strother's house, Mount Wesley Academy, and others. The negatives also include images of portraits or letters of prominent individuals, such as Joseph Barnes, Alexander Boteler, DeWitt Clinton, General William Darke, Moses Hoge, and James Rumsey and family. Some subjects are unidentified.

Reed-Ross Family. Photographs and Papers. ca. 1860-1953, 1 ft. 1 in., Acquired in 2014. A&M 4061.

Photographs and papers of the Reed-Ross family of northern West Virginia, including two Victorian photo albums with identified members of the Reed and Ross families, family bible with genealogy information, "family register" genealogy chart for Ross family members in Monongalia County, ephemera, and other material.

Thoney Pietro Company. Ledger. 1919-1920, 2 1/2 in., Gift in 2015. A&M 4086.

Ledger kept by the Thoney Pietro Company of Morgantown, West Virginia (1919-1920). The company was named for and partly owned by Thoney Pietro, an Italian immigrant, Morgantown resident, skilled stonemason, and building contractor. Records include the by-laws of the company, minutes of stock holder meetings, and stock transfers.

Topographic Maps of West Virginia. 1909-1924, undated, 1 ft. 3 in., Gift in 2014. A&M 4046.

Structural and topographical maps of various locations in West Virginia. Most maps were created by the West Virginia Geological Survey. Counties depicted include Boone, Braxton, Brooke, Calhoun, Clay, Gilmer, Hancock, Lewis, Lincoln, Logan, Mason, Marshall, Mingo, Nicholas, Ohio, Roane, Tyler, Wetzel, and Wirt County. Geological and geographical features depicted include coal, oil, gas, iron ore, and limestone areas; Berea grit/sand and Injun Sand;



Construction of the new WVU Chemistry Building (Clark Hall), ca. 1924.

state roads; railroads; and virgin and cut-over forest areas.

West Virginia University. Clark Hall. Construction Photographs. ca. 1924-1940, 3 leaves, Gift in 2015. A&M 4085.

Photographs documenting the construction of Clark Hall at West Virginia University, including 24 negatives and their corresponding prints.

West Virginia University. College of Human Resources and Education. Dean. Speeches and Papers by William G. Monahan. 1972-2011, 5 in., Transfer in 2014. A&M 5183.

Speeches and papers of William G. Monahan, who served as the dean of the College of Human Resources and Education at West Virginia University beginning in 1972. He retired as Professor Emeritus of Higher Education after serving as dean for a decade. Speeches and papers include typed copies of speeches given by Monahan, with an index of speeches, as well as notes for speeches, articles, and other material. Topics of writings mostly regard higher education. Also includes a copy of Monahan's obituary.

West Virginia University Seal. Materials Regarding History of Seal. 1869-1981, 7 items, Acquired in 2014. A&M 4028.

Copy of the West Virginia University seal with articles and clippings regarding the history of the seal. Includes a photocopy of the resolution by the Board of Regents authorizing the creation of a seal in 1869 (originals located in A&M 690) and several letters regarding the correct translation of the Ancient Greek motto on the seal.

West Virginia Volunteer Infantry, 1st Regiment, Company F. Quartermaster Records. 1863-1864, 19 items, Gift in 2015. A&M 4069.

Quartermaster records of Company F, 1st Regiment, West Virginia Volunteers for period November 1863 to November 1864. Many documents are signed by Theodore L. Apple, 1st Lieutenant of the unit. Most documents are dated; many documents identify location, and list supplies in detail; and a few documents list names of soldiers in the unit. Locations mentioned are in West Virginia (New Creek, Petersburg, and Wheeling), Maryland (Cumberland), and Virginia (Winchester).

Weston State Hospital. Front Elevation and Illustrations. 1859, 1880, undated, 4 items, Transfer in 2015. A&M 4071.

Materials related to Weston State Hospital (formerly the Lunatic Asylum at Weston). Includes: 1) "Front Elevation of Lunatic Asylum, West of the Alleghany Mountains", "R. Snowden Andrews, Architect, Baltimore, MD" (1859; 12 1/2 in. x 49 in.); 2) "West Virginia Hospital for the Insane, at Weston" (undated); 3) State Hospital in Weston, from German edition of Frank Leslie's Illustrated (undated); 4) "New State Hospital for the Insane, At Weston", from Frank Leslie's Illustrated (1880). See also "Report of the Lunatic Asylum West of the Alleghany Mountains, 1859" in the Printed Ephemera Collection, cataloged under P10600. It includes a report from the Board of Directors to Virginia Governor Henry Wise, financial estimates for construction of the hospital, and a report from the architect R. Snowden Andrews.

Whetsell Collection. Historical Records Regarding West Virginia. ca. 1905-1954, 31 ft. 3 in., Gift in 2014. A&M 4064.

Historical records collected by Elkins, West Virginia resident Robert C. Whetsell. Includes mostly records of the Baldwin-Chandlee supply company (supplying equipment to regional timber companies, etc.), including predominantly invoices, and also correspondence and ledgers (boxes 1-21, 1907-1925). There are also: papers of M.M. Smith, an Elkins businessman, regarding the estate of A.W. Smith (box 22, ca. 1863-1892); Randolph County Court dockets documenting the court of Justice J.L. Ligget (box 23, 1918-1919); three ledgers of the Inter-Mountain Coal and Lumber Company (1936-1953); papers of J.H. Elder, an Elkins businessman (1907-1954); and glass plate negatives by Pittsenberger, a photographer, of scenes of the Pendleton County, West Virginia communities of Brandywine and Sugar Grove (ca. 1905-1920).



A hunter and his dog pose in front of the Brandywine Post Office, Pendleton County, ca. 1910.

Williamson, Marshall L., Medic, U.S. Navy. Photograph Album of New Hebrides During World War II. 1943-1944, 1/4 in., Acquired in 2015. A&M 4072.

Photographs documenting activities of US Navy Medical Corps in the New Hebrides (or Vanuatu) during World War II. These 54 photos were taken by taken by Marshall L. Williamson, US Navy Medical Corps, assigned to the 57th Naval Construction Battalion (Seabees). Includes group portraits of Medical Corps personnel and other servicemen; photos of a Christian church, barracks, transportation, roads, base of operations, island natives and their dwellings, and American servicemen swimming, among other topics. Many of the photographs include identification provided by their creator, Marshall Williamson. Most photos were shot on the island of Espiritu Santo, within the New Hebrides.

Wilson, Roderick, Science Teacher. National Youth Science Camp Records and Other Material. ca. 1963 - 2013, 2 ft. 11 in., Gift in 2014. A&M 4048.

Records regarding the National Youth Science Camp created by Roderick Wilson, a retired Physics teacher of West



Storer College Glee Club, ca. 1928.

Virginia University Institute of Technology. Includes delegate selection records, 1990-1996 (box 1, in three folders); visitor autograph books, 1973-1985, that include signatures by Senators Bob Dole, Strom Thurmond, etc. (box 1, in three books); and four reels of motion picture film, including footage of the Science Camp, undated (box 2). Also includes copies of glass collecting and genealogy related publications, and other material.

Worthington Pharmacy Scrapbook. ca. 1926-1935, 3 in., Gift in 2014. A&M 4065.

Scrapbook of pharmacy-related material, likely compiled by an employee of Worthington Pharmacy in Worthington, West Virginia. Includes clippings, ephemera, advertisements, pamphlets, broadsides, and other materials. Subjects include the history of pharmacy, the importance of local drugstores, independent vs. chain drugstores, and Worthington Pharmacy. Clippings and ephemera include "Guide Posts on the Road to Success" (1926), Merck & Co. handbills about the importance of the "Neighborhood Druggist" (ca. 1930), and "Peanut Crackle", among others. Worthington Pharmacy advertisements include postcards, handbills, and broadsides publicizing weekly sales, promotions, and

more. Some of the Worthington Pharmacy ads mention other local businesses, including I. McIntire's Cash Store and Bramer's Market. Some ads mention that the pharmacy's general manager was Virgil Ross Hertzog. An excerpt about Hertzog and the history of pharmacy in Worthington from *History of Worthington, West Virginia, and Surrounding Communities*, by Harvey C. Fortney and Heisel M. Fox (1968), is also included for reference.

Wylie-Tomlinson Letter Collection Regarding the Civil War and Other Topics. ca. 1830-1900, 1 ft. 3 in., Gift in 2014. A&M 4068.

Correspondence of Will Tomlinson, a newspaper publisher in southern Ohio, his wife Eliza Wylie Tomlinson, and their family, friends, and colleagues. The letters range from the 1830s to the 1890s, the bulk from 1860-1865. Topics include abolition, Cincinnati, Civil War battles, the Emancipation Proclamation, journalism, roles of women and children, Underground Railroad, and Wylie family members, among other subjects. The collection was researched for the book *A Printer's Kiss: The Life and Letters of a Civil War Newspaperman* (Kent State University Press, 2014) authored by Patricia Donohoe.